

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology applied in the research. It discusses research questions, research design, research procedure, data source, data collection and analysis, synopsis, and sample of analysis.

3.1 Research Questions

The present research studies the look of the characters bullied in selected panels and the representation of look-based bullying shown in *Lookism* webtoon. The research is conducted to answer these research questions:

1. What are the look features of bullied characters that can be found in *Lookism* webtoon?
2. What does look-based bullying represent?

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a crucial part and essential in conducting a study. Research design is the "glue" that holds all of the elements in research (Akhtar, 2016). Therefore, as this study aims to describe and unveil the look of the characters being bullied and the representation of look-based bullying, this research employs a qualitative method. As Patton and Cochran (2002) stated, qualitative research allows the researcher to address and understand various aspects such as people's experiences, understanding different perspectives, and behavior. Moreover, the qualitative method also produces in-depth and illustrative information to understand the analysis from various dimensions (Queiros, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). The method is chosen since it answers the research problems by elaborating the data and attempts to understand the meaning of the data without changing the context.

This research also employed the descriptive method. Referring to McCombes (2019), the descriptive method aims to describe a population,

situation, or phenomenon accurately. It is also suitable when the research aims to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. In the research, the descriptive method is employed to identify and discuss the various looks in text.

Furthermore, the examination of the collected data in the webtoon is carried out using the representation theory proposed by Hall (1997). The representation theory then used to construct the meaning of the characters look and act of look-based bullying in *Lookism*.

3.3 Research Procedure

This research focused on investigating the look of the bullied characters and the representation of look-based bullying in *Lookism*. The data were collected from selected panels of the webtoon that show the characters' looks and the acts of look-based bullying.

3.4 Data Source

The data were taken from *Lookism* webtoon by Taejoon Park, first published in 2017. The webtoon was created in 2014 and officially released in 2017 in Line Webtoon application. This webtoon has been translated into several languages: English, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and French. This research uses the English translation of the webtoon by selecting the episodes and panels that show the characters' looks in various bullying contexts.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The technique performed to collect the data was accessing the *Lookism* webtoon in the Line Webtoon application. There were 80 episodes of the webtoon, which were then selected based on the appearance of bullied looks. From the collected episodes, 34 panels (individual frames) of the webtoon were chosen for analysis based on the appearance of the characters look in bullying context. Close reading was conducted on the panels to

determine the various features of bullied characters and, for comparison, to also determine the features of bullies and characters who are not bullied.

Further, into the analysis, the data on looks were later analyzed using the representation theory from Hall (1997) to describe the looks of the characters and to discuss the representation of acts of look-based bullying in the webtoon.

3.6 Synopsis of *Lookism* Webtoon


Lookism is a webtoon written and illustrated by Taejoon Park, it was first officially published online on Line Naver webtoon in November 2014, and its English version was in 2017. *Lookism* webtoon is a story about a high school student who switches between two bodies that have an entirely different look. It is about a young man called Daniel Park. He is a freshman year student of high school and looked down upon because of his fat and ugly appearance. Even though he is a sweet and kind person, Daniel is constantly bullied and harassed because of his look. The bullying that he experiences in school made him depressed, and he often takes out his anger verbally on his mother, who does not know that her son is bullied. Soon after, because of the constant bullying that he faced in school and to start fresh, he asks his mother for a school transfer. Unfortunately, Daniel's mother said no since their economic condition and the assumptions of his mother that all his friends are there. Hearing the reason of his mother that if he transfers school, he will leave behind his friends, he pours out his outrage towards his mom.

Before long, his mother realized that she does not pay close enough attention to her son. She decides to go to Daniel's school to ask whether her son can transfer school; however, the teacher said that it is not possible, looking at Daniel's grade and how expensive it is. However, his mother sees that Logan Lee is bullying Daniel. Because of that, his mother allows him to transfer school to Seoul. He moves alone and decides to transfer to an arts high school, and choosing fashion as his course of study.

However, a few nights before he attends his new school, he wakes up in an entirely different body in the middle of the night. He wakes up in a body that he considers ‘perfect,’; tall, muscular, and extremely handsome. He sees that his ‘initial’ body is sleeping. Daniel tries to find an answer to the possibility of someone change body. Eventually, he finds his answer and decides that the other body falls asleep when one body is in use. Using it for his advantage, he decides that he will split between two bodies. The new body is used in the daytime, and the original is used at night. As he lives in two different bodies, he realizes how different people treat him when he lives in his new form and his initial one. Through his new form, he experiences many things that are not possible when he is in his initial form, such as go-to karaoke with friends, getting the girls’ attention, being considered someone good in a fight, and many others. Meanwhile, when he is in his initial form, he only experiences pain, as an easy target to be bullied. He soon begins to recognize that the way society discriminates against people simply because of their looks.

3.7 Sample of Analysis

The data is presented in the form of a table, as shown below. The table consists of six difference column: the number of the evidence, the number of the selected episodes, the selected panels, the context of the selected panels, description of the episodes, and features In the following table, the selected panels shows the look of the main character, Daniel Park ‘initial form’. The table of analysis of this research is presented in the following table:

Daniel’s ‘initial form’					
No	Episode	Selected Panels	Context	Description	Features
<i>1</i>	Episode 2		Daniel’s ‘initial form’ new hairstyle	Daniel moves to Seoul, and he decides to cut his hair.	Round face, chubby cheeks, double chin, slanted eyes, bulbous

					nose, thick lips.
2	Episode 5		Daniel's 'initial form' at the convenience store	Daniel come to the part- time job with his 'initial form,' and the manager rejects him	Round face, chubby cheeks, double chin, slanted eyes,
3	Episode 13		Daniel's 'initial form' flustered face	Daniel's 'initial form' comes to the restaurant to pick up his 'new form', he got is mocked by his 'new form' friends.	bulbous nose, thick lips, wear glasses. .

The data were then analyzed by using representation theory by Hall (1997)